MONTEREY NEWS

May 2005
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The Town

Budget

With the May 7, 2005, Town Meeting looming ever closer, a fair amount of Select Board time in April was directed to budgetary concerns. The March 28th Select Board meeting included a one-hour closed session with the Director of Operations. The April 4th meeting, the last day for warrant submissions, found members of the Finance Committee and Select Board working with Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier to reduce the projected budget to an amount acceptable within the 2½ percent requirement.

On various occasions and in various ways, Gauthier patiently explained that the budget preparation is both art and science. Predictions must be made based on numbers from previous years, guesses about state funding, expectations from new growth, and other unknowns. Moreover, a number of expenses are obligatory, so cuts cannot be made indiscriminately.

Fire Chief Ray Tryon offered to drop his request of $2,500 for forest fire funds. Tryon also said that the Fire Department would be selling a 1992 GMC one-ton truck they had received from the Highway Department. He was asked to submit an article for Town Meeting to authorize the Select Board to sell the truck.

Maynard Forbes

The new bridge on upper New Marlborough Road

The results of the discussions, consultations, hand-wringing and number crunching throughout March and April resulted in a proposed town budget of $2,525,393.00, which includes $321,783.00 in special articles.

At the April 25th Select Board meeting, Finance Committee member Debra Mielke asked for help in researching the Massachusetts law on payment of overtime for supervisory personnel, which she believes is prohibited by the law. Her request evolved from a lengthy discussion at the April 22nd informational meeting that bared the details of the Director of Operation's salary and bonus. Mielke suggested that town counsel be consulted on this question. She added that perhaps it would be necessary to add an additional person for plowing in the winter.

The Select Board agreed that it would work closely with the Finance Committee all year to set goals, guidelines, and procedures for salaries and wages. For history's sake, Select Board member Michèle Miller asked that memos from department heads about plans and needs be dated for future reference.

Raises of 3 percent have been allotted for town employees. Budget details are available in the Town Meeting Warrant.

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Operations

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes delivered to Select Board Chairman Jonathan Sylbert the EPA regulations covering the salt shed at the Town garage and the transfer station. Forbes has applied for two permits, one for the transfer station and one for the salt shed. The bins at the transfer station are polluting because they lack covers. Monterey needs to get to the "no exposure" level. Forbes applied in 2004, and although the town has not yet received a permit, he believes the five years for compliance might start with application, not with approval.

The new bridge on upper New Marlborough Road has been installed, and is receiving plaudits from all who see it. Gould Farm organized a cleanup with the Highway Department from the old firehouse to the new one.

Forbes presented the Select Board with a proposal to replace the front-end loader. The fifteen-year capital expenses plan, written five years ago, called for a new loader in 2004. It was pointed out that the same plan called for a new police cruiser every three years, which is the schedule followed for that department.

On April 11 at 11:00 a.m., the Select Board accepted three sealed bids for the loader, one of which will be awarded on May 9, 2005. The three companies bidding are Tricounty from West Springfield, CN Wood from Whateley, and Tyler Equipment from East Longmeadow. With a trade-in, the bids were in the $90,000-$100,000 range. Each firm's representative was asked about service and maintenance, in addition to the nature of the vehicle itself. Ray Tryon pointed out that when buying large vehicles, Monterey typically buys a service contract.

Forbes reported that the entire interior of Bally Gally is being painted, and that the first estimate for hot-water baseboard heating throughout was $9,800. Repairs will be completed in time for the house to be rented over the summer for $2,000 per month. It will not become affordable housing until it receives state certification.

Forbes reported that windows in the town garage need double-paned replacements, for which funds have been requested in the 2006 budget.

Richard Tryon informed the Select Board of his objection to using oil-and-stone on River Road, explaining that his preference was to spend more money on the right type of surface at the outset, rather than having to repair or replace roads or parts thereof on a frequent basis. Forbes said that there is a maintenance agreement between Monterey and the state that requires the town to keep the River Road bridge in good repair. Such agreements are new, and it was thought a good idea for town counsel to review it.

Monterey was granted a settlement of $5,426.80 for damages incurred to Mt.

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New Bridge on upper New Marlborough Road under construction and after completion (photos by Maynard Forbes)

Hunger Road when heavy items fell off of a delivery truck and town personnel had to clean up.

Sylbert asked Forbes about the disposition of oil and batteries at the transfer station. Town Administrative Assistant Bonnie Tedder said that batteries and dirty oil are not part of the town's contract with the Master Garbologist. Forbes will work with Tedder to monitor the situation.

Select Board member Michael Storch asked Forbes if he could ride around Monterey with Forbes to learn more about upkeep of town roads and such. The three Select Board members plan to tour the town with Forbes in the near future.

Fairview Road

Prior to the April 11th special meeting on Fairview Road, Forbes presented a preliminary engineer-designed drainage plan, with written details on water flow. Although the Select Board had asked that the engineer attend the April 11th meeting, Forbes said the charge of about $800-900 for the evening was prohibitive. Moreover, he said the engineer could focus only on drainage, not questions. Nonetheless, Storch said that it is imperative that "there be a narrative" to enable people to read what the engineers are going to do.

Sylbert reminded the Select Board that the April 11th meeting was planned primarily so residents could express themselves about the road rather than hear about the details of the engineer's plan. If people are interested in having Fairview remain a dirt road, the town will need another engineer's plan. Storch said that virtually everyone who came to that meeting would know that Monterey has spent $14,000 on an engineering report, and thus there should be something from the engineers summarizing what's in those drawings.

A large group of residents assembled in the Select Board room of Town Hall on April 11 to discuss Fairview Road. Select Board member Michèle Miller moderated the meeting, having no trouble soliciting strongly held opinions about the road. There was near-unanimous feeling in the room that, irrespective of the eventual outcome of the road's disposition, safety is the primary concern. Those who prefer to keep it a dirt road cite the likelihood of speeding along paved roads. Partisans of the paving option believe the road is simply too narrow and must be widened and paved to insure against accidents.

In addition to the overriding importance of safety, questions were raised concerning installation and maintenance costs, environmental concerns, drainage,

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and aesthetic issues. Everyone agrees that drainage is critical to the road's maintenance. At contention is the most effective and harmonious path to achieving that drainage.

Only near the end of the ninety-minute meeting did it became clear that just a small section of Fairview Road is under consideration for action. To the surprise of many, including this reporter, the current proposal concerns approximately 900–1000 feet of the road, running roughly from the high point of the Montgomery's third driveway to an area just beyond their second driveway. This is the steepest part of the road, and is made more dangerous by being narrow. Because both sides of the road are high, water has nowhere to go but down the road and thus into the wetlands and the stream, wreaking environmental havoc along the way.

The three options for correcting the drainage problem are to leave it as dirt, finish it with oil-and-stone, or pave it. Forbes said that to maintain the road as dirt, seventy trees would be need to be cut down to expand the road's width to support appropriate drainage. Doing so would completely alter the character of the road at that point, eliminating a picturesque canopy of trees on both sides. Forbes said that, depending on weather conditions, Monterey spends approximately $5,000–$14,000 annually to maintain the dirt section of Fairview Road.

The oil-and-stone option is somewhere on the continuum from the charm of dirt to the durability of paving. Oil-and-stone does not provide a long-lasting hard surface, but it is impervious to water, making it a desirable drainage arrangement. Oil-and-stone works in a comparable way to a paved surface, but because the base is thinner, it is less expensive. Installed properly, an oil-and-stone road should last six to ten years. Additionally, an oil-and-stone treatment would not require widening the road.

Paving a road with a minimum of a two-inch-thick base—more frequently a six-inch base is used—makes a road impervious to water. The initial cost of paving is high, but maintenance is lower than dirt or oil-and-stone roads. And, like the oil-and-stone option, paving the road would not require widening it.

The meeting concluded with a request that Forbes ask the engineer who prepared the report to revisit the question but from the viewpoint that the road could be widened within certain parameters.

Building

Problems with an official certificate of occupancy for Town Hall continue to bedevil Monterey. Building Commissioner Don Torrico has a special certificate of occupancy, but it is not official. In an ongoing attempt to determine what are code issues and what are blueprint oversights, Torrico has met, and continues to meet, with architect David Bixby and Cardan Construction. Problems include the placement of all utilities for the building below the flood plain level, meaning that a 100-year flood could wash them out, and a Department of Environmental Protection violation because the sump pump is too close to the oil tank. Torrico will bring the Select Board a list of outstanding issues so the Board can keep informed on compliance.

Torrico will check Bally Gally to make sure that the repairs leave it in rentable condition.

Torrico reported that there are a lot of special permits for zoning and that the amount of business requires more than the ten hours per week projected in the new budget. He said that he is averaging thirteen hours per week, a figure that can only go higher as construction season begins. The issue of hourly payment for managers and directors versus a fixed salary is a thorny one, and affects more than just the Building Commissioner. The 2006 budget, discussed at the informational meeting on April 22, contains a fixed salary for the commissioner. Indeed, the sense of that meeting was that all department heads, including the Director of Operations, be paid fixed salaries not based on hours worked.

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Education

Franny Huberman, mother of two grade school children, addressed the Select Board about her unhappiness with Undermountain School. Her most serious concern is the lack of communication between school parents, exemplified by the School Board's scheduling of big fundraisers for Undermountain and New Marlborough Schools on the same day. There is one parent-teacher conference in the fall, and "that's it except for report cards." She also expressed concern about transportation. Sylbert suggested that Huberman join the School Committee, now being formed to address the concerns of Monterey parents. He believes the members should discuss the issues, write a report, and then organize a meeting with the School Superintendent.

Chuck Mielke thanked the Select Board for setting up a meeting at Town Hall with Valerie Spriggs on March 21. Deborah D. Mielke offered to succeed her husband, Rick Mielke, as School Representative. The Select Board vigorously welcomed her interest in this important position.

Police Report

Chief of Police Gareth Backhaus reported a break-in to a house under construction on Route 23 near the Otis line. The contractor was in the process of shingling when some person or persons stole the staging bolted to the house, the air compressor, hoses, a nailer, and several ladders. The matter is under investigation.

After a ten-year old boy was bitten by a dog on Hupi Road, Backhaus reported the incident to Animal Control officer Marty Clark, who handles such matters. Clark spoke at the April 25th Select Board meeting, explaining that his request for a $500 increase in his salary for the next year is based on the increasing cost of gasoline. He asked that complaints about dogs not on leashes be reported to him.

A "No Dogs Allowed" sign is posted once again in Greene Park, where children play ball on the field. On Friday, April 22, a dog was killed on Hupi Road by a hit-and-run driver. And, in one of those sketches where life imitates comedy, the Police Department responded to a call for help when a car owner's dog locked the keys in the car.

A suspicious vehicle report around midnight on Mt. Hunger Road was investigated. "We like getting these calls," says Backhaus, "because if a car is strange to the neighborhood, we need to know so we can check it out." Generally speaking, a "suspicious vehicle" is one that is parked. The Police Department received a false alarm when a gardener went to the client's garage. And there was an abandoned 911 call that was the result of rainwater in the wires rather than an actual telephone call.

Backhaus said that as the weather gets warmer, there will be more children, pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, and horses on Monterey roads. He asks that residents police themselves by following the speed limits. Fines levied this year include:

- Failure to stop or yield at sign or light: $100
- Crosswalk violation: $150
- Failure to stop for a school bus: $200
- Speeding in a construction zone: Double the regular fine of $10 per mile
- Seat belt violations: $50

The Police Department provided help with safety for the Eater Egg hunt on the library lawn sponsored by the Coffee Club on March 27. On March 24, an unregistered vehicle was stopped and towed.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Ray Tryon presented the Select Board with an agreement, approved by the Berkshire County Fire Chiefs Association, that all Berkshire County towns are being asked to sign, foregoing any liability for equipment and personnel when they are performing services in other

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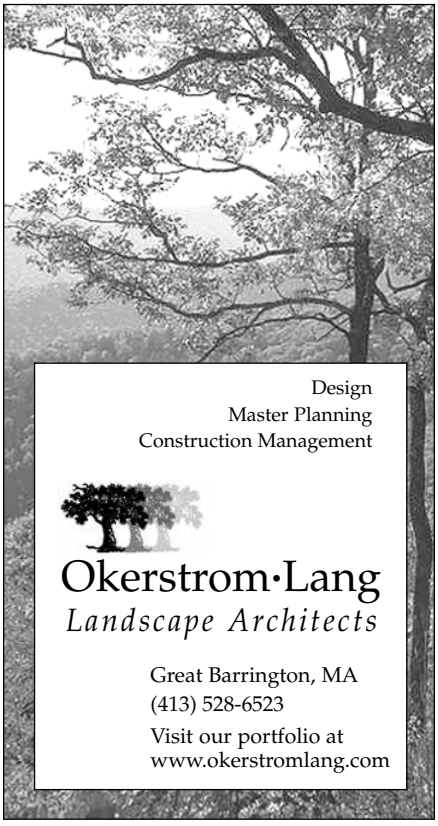

towns. Tryon pointed out that although Monterey voted positively on this matter in 1958, this agreement is the first time the policy has been formalized.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Barbara Swann presented the Select Board with two items for the May 7, 2005, Town Meeting Warrant. One concerns a provision of Massachusetts law requiring the town to provide at least a portion of group health and life insurance, and that eligible retirees who qualify for Medicare be required to enroll in a town-paid supplemental Medicare plan. Discussion of this matter at the April 22nd informational meeting led to a request for more information on the potential cost of this measure.

The second item Swann submitted asks for $10,500 to buy voter tabulation and backup voting machines, as mandated by the Massachusetts Secretary of State's interpretation of the Help America Vote Act. Monterey, like towns all over America, must comply with this act by March 2006. Monterey's venerable crank box will no longer be used for state and national elections; instead the town's voters might use a machine accessible to the disabled. Swann believes that the machine may violate the secret ballot.

Other Warrant Articles

The Select Board officially accepted a petition presented by Bonner McAllester to include a special article on the warrant protesting the deployment of the Massachusetts National Guard in Iraq. At the April 25th Select Board meeting, town resident Margaret Pasche expressed her strong opposition to the article, noting that everyone had a chance to vote in the 2004 election, and must accept the electoral decision. Storch said that McAllester has every right to submit a petition signed by the required number of registered voters to have the article in the warrant, but that at Town Meeting he intends to ask that it be passed over because it is an inappropriate political statement for a town meeting. Miller disagreed, pointing out that in a democracy, people need to be able to express themselves.

The Select Board also agreed to include a warrant article requesting the establishment of an Agricultural Commission for Monterey to promote the "right-to-farm" law.

Although Friends of Lake Garfield President Janet Cathcart had requested a warrant article requesting $2,500 to help defray the costs of LakeFest, the item was not placed on the warrant due to error. Town counsel advised Barbara Gauthier that the "I Love Monterey Day" line item on the warrant could be amended at Town Meeting to include the sum requested for LakeFest, although if approved it would be for this year only. Miller suggested that the town use "I Love Monterey" Day as an opportunity for people to make a commitment to the town to, for example, help with cleanup along the roads or clear brush from town-owned land.

Michelle Jette of Berkshire Regional Planning had requested an article on the warrant instructing Monterey to clean the water dispersal system at the boat ramp on Lake Buel. This request was somehow omitted from the warrant; resolution of this dilemma will be discussed at a meeting with the Select Board and Jette at the May 2nd Select Board meeting.

This and That

Chris Blair, chair of the Conservation Commission, sent the Select Board a short report on annual high water. He will be checking with Planning Board Chair Maggie Lawrence on this matter.

The Park Commission is recruiting a replacement for the seat held until recently by Linda Mulvey. Park Commission chair Leroy Thorpe asked if Monterey could hire a sixteen-year old certified lifeguard who lives in town. The Select Board advised him to call the town counsel or check with the young woman's certifying agency.

Monterey General Store owner Kenn Basler announced that there is now a community bulletin board in the store for meeting notices.

Carol Edelman presented the Select Board with another complaint about the dogs belonging to the construction workers on the Jaffe property on Hupi Road.

Monterey received approval from the Attorney General for the town bylaw restricting times and areas for the operation of jet skies on Lake Garfield.

Jim and Maxine Goetschius of Tyringham Road requested town cooperation with a stonewall on their property, built by a previous owner, that extends into the town right-of-way. The wall needs to be rebuilt, and the Goetschius's asked for financial help. Michèle Miller pointed out that rebuilding the wall is not a town responsibility, particularly since it should not have been built in the first place. Monterey policy maintains a 25-foot right-of-way from the center of the road so that roads can be widened if necessary. There are hundreds of stonewalls and trees on town property, and Monterey cannot possibly afford to take care of them, even though they are a major component in giving the town its distinctive character and charm.

— Laurily K. Epstein

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Fairview Road

On April 11th the Select Board held a public meeting to gather input from townspeople on the drainage problems on Fairview Road. Many people attended, and concerns about safety and the maintenance of gravel roads in town were expressed. At the end of the meeting a voice vote affirmed the town's interest in the board's commitment to pursue an alternative solution that would maintain the road as a dirt road, while acknowledging that others would prefer improving it by using oil and stone on a short section of its steepest part.

Unfortunately, there appears still to be misinformation about the board's intentions, which I would like to clarify once again. The board is committed both to the maintenance of our gravel roads in town and to finding the best solution to the problem of Fairview Road. No work will begin until the board is satisfied that the most responsible solution has been arrived at. We're encouraged by everyone's interest and look forward to fixing a long-standing problem.

— Jonathan Sylbert
Chair, Select Board

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Bear Safe Guide

Every year in the United States, an increasing number of people are setting up residence or vacationing in bear country. But many are not sufficiently prepared to deal with their wild neighbors. A bear is quickly labeled a "nuisance" when it becomes used to finding food in areas where people live or recreate. All too often, the problem is solved in the most extreme way—by shooting the bear. Carelessly stored food, garbage, even barbeque grease and bird feeders, can all attract bears and keep them coming back. By eliminating the source of the attraction, you eliminate visits from "nuisance" bears, and keep others from becoming a problem in the future.

Contrary to popular perception, bears are not usually aggressive toward humans and, in fact, will try to avoid humans as much as possible. Bears are naturally shy and retiring creatures that typically act aggressively only when threatened. However, a hungry bear will enter a backyard or campground if lured by the smells of a barbeque or trash bin. Bears are natural scavengers. They will remember an easy source of food and will keep returning if the food source is not properly disposed of.

Garbage Disposal

Don't leave food, garbage, or pet food out for bears. Store garbage indoors or outside in bear-proof containers. If there is garbage pick-up in your area, put your trash out an hour or two before the garbage truck arrives. If you are leaving several days before the scheduled pickup, haul your garbage to the dump.

If You Encounter a Bear

Remain calm and assess the situation. If the bear is at a distance and is not displaying any aggressive behavior, back away slowly in the direction from which you came. Watch the bear but avoid making direct eye contact. If the bear is aware of your presence but is still at some distance try to warn it off. Extend your arms above your head and try to make yourself appear as large as possible. Talk to the bear in a loud, deep gruff voice. Continue to back away. Move slowly. Never run! Bears can run much faster than you can.

More Helpful Hints

Keep barbeque grills clean and free from grease. Store inside if possible.

Enclose all composts, and don't put fish, meat, or fruit into your compost. Use lime to reduce odors.

Pick fruit daily from trees on your property, even if you don't plan to eat it. Rotting fruit left on the ground is a powerful bear attractant.

Avoid bird feeders. Birdseed, suet, and hummingbird mixes may attract bears.

It is best to keep pets inside at night, if possible. Don't leave pet food outside.

It is not unusual for bears to wander into backyards. If you have taken precautions, the bears will find nothing of interest and will likely move on. REMEMBER PROBLEM BEARS ARE NOT BORN; THEY ARE MADE. It is nearly impossible for a bear to make its daily excursions without walking through someone's property. If you have stored your food and garbage properly, the bear will likely move on. If a bear is hanging around, something is attracting it. Removing the attraction will usually solve the problem.

Humans and bears can live together. After all they were here first and we have encroached on their territory.

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Bidwell House Has New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of The Bidwell House Museum has announced the appointment of Dr. Martha LaCroix Dailey as Executive Director. Dailey was a distinguished teacher and curriculum coordinator at Mt. Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown and worked at the New York State Museum in Albany, New York, and the Navajo Tribal Museum in Window Rock, Arizona. Robert Duffy, President of The Bidwell House Museum, said Dailey would direct the preservation, conservation, and presentation of the museum's outstanding colonial collection and educational events.

The previous director, Brian O'Grady, will remain as a consultant.

Dailey received a PhD in American Studies from the University of New Mexico and holds masters degrees from the University of Massachusetts and MCLA. She received a BS in history from The College of St. Rose, Albany, New York. She was honored by the U.S. Department of Education at White House ceremonies on two occasions as a Distinguished Teacher from Massachusetts in the Presidential Scholars Program and has received many honors, including three Fulbright fellowships. She worked at C-Span on the presidential series for the nation's schools and has researched and written individual life histories.

Situated on two hundred acres in Monterey, the Bidwell House is a 1750 Georgian saltbox built by the Rev. Adonijah Bidwell, first minister to pioneers in the frontier region of the Berkshire Hills, east of Great Barrington. The museum opened in 1990 following a twenty-five-year restoration project, which included a search for authentic holdings listed in Rev. Bidwell's 1786 will. Original documents from the reverend's life are held by the museum and by the Bienecke Library at Yale, where he received his divinity degree. Philanthropists Jack Hargis and David Brush directed the re-creation of the eighteenth-century site, which is described by Wendell Garrett of Sotheby's as "the most perfect example of a New England country home in its feelings, appearance, and continuing daily life."

According to Dr. Dailey, "Rev. Bidwell had an astounding forty-eight chairs in his inventory; we know his home was a parsonage and a gathering place for decades prior to the American Revolution, during the war, and through the early events framing the Commonwealth's Constitution, Shays' Rebellion, and the U.S. Constitution. The house served as a gathering place for local farmers and trades people committed to bringing a measure of self-governance, and ultimately democracy, to western Massachusetts. Rev. Bidwell's sermons are written in code, and it is my hope that serious study of these early documents will shed light on the period. We would like the museum to continue to be 'a gathering place' and invite participation and sponsorships of our exhibits, interactive programs, lectures, concerts, workshops, and extensive gardens."

The grounds include a colonial-style kitchen garden and hiking trails leading to historic markers. The Bidwell House Museum is open from Memorial Day weekend through mid-October, Thursday to Monday, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Directions and information can be found on the web at bidwellhousemusuem.org or by calling 413-528-6888.

Bidwell Benefit Tag Sale

Save the date! Re-cycle your discards! Let your unwanted household items become others' treasures at the BIDWELL BENEFIT TAG SALE, Saturday, July 30, for the benefit of, and on the grounds of, The Bidwell House Museum, Art School Road, Monterey.

To contribute your gently-used cast-offs, call Kathryn Roberts: 413-528-6188 (no clothing, shoes, or appliances, please).

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Annabel Edelman Wins French Language Award

Annabel Edelman has again been awarded the Laureat Du Chapitre award in recognition of high achievement on the annual French language and culture exam, the Concours National de Francais, given by the Association Americaine des Professeurs de Francais, Annabel, a sophomore at Lenox Memorial High School, has also earned High Honor Roll status for the first three quarters of the school year. Proud parents are Jim and Carol Edelman. Annabel practiced her skills during the family's trip to Paris over school break.

Maynard Forbes

The Highway Department's new OshKosh proved its worth this winter, as did the road crew, in spades, in dealing with the 114 inches of total snowfall, way above average. Hats off to Rich Crittenden (foreman), PeterLePrevost, Lyman Thomson, and Maynard Forbes (Director of Operations).

Green Corner
Healthy Gardens and Lawns

Spring is here! The garden calls for attention. Before reaching for the herbicide, pesticide, or chemical fertilizer, think twice. Pesticide exposure is linked to poisonings, learning disabilities in children, Parkinson's disease, cancers and reproductive and endocrine disruption. Butterflies, songbirds, pets, and other critters are unintentionally harmed by pesticide use. Here are some basic principles for healthy gardens:

• Choose plants wisely. Select plants that are suited to the conditions in your landscape. Choose varieties that are pest and disease resistant. Avoid plants with roots emerging from the drainage hole.

• Know your soil. Get a free soil test from the Master Gardeners to help guide your garden decisions. Call 413-298-5355 to find out when and where.

• Watering. Plants need one inch of water a week, a little more for transplants. A rain gauge takes the guesswork out of Mother Nature's rainfall.

• Tolerating insects. Don't assume all insects are pests. First, identify the insect. Many insects are beneficial. Plants can also tolerate low levels of pests. When you know that a pest can cause great harm to garden plants, always use the most specific and least toxic approach.

Learn more about healthy gardening at http://www.wmassmastergardeners.org/ or call CET, 413- 445-4556.

— Ruth Dinerman, CET

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GreenStart for Renewable Energy

The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) and Mass Energy Consumers Alliance (Mass Energy) have teamed up to offer one green electricity option across Massachusetts. New England GreenStart is available to Massachusetts Electric Company residential and small business customers through their monthly electric bills. GreenStart will match participant's electric usage with 100% renewable resources generated in New England. CET's GreenerWatts New England participants will be automatically switched to New England GreenStart on April 30.

GreenStart qualifies for Clean Energy ChoiceSM, a program of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC). Clean Energy Choice provides grants to communities based on the number of residential customers who support clean energy through Massachusetts Electric Company's program. Benefits of the collaboration include:

• MTC matches 54% of the monthly premium paid by residential subscribers for GreenStart and provide funds to their communities for renewable energy projects.

• Those who itemize their taxes can deduct 54% of the GreenStart premium from their federal taxes, thus lowering the net cost for clean energy.

As a result of this collaboration, New England GreenStart will be the only offering from a Massachusetts-based, nonprofit supplier. Both CET and Mass Energy share a vision that combines conservation and efficiency with support for renewable energy choices. The organizations both provide consumer education and opportunities that help Massachusetts citizens make purchasing decisions and carry out daily activities that result in less energy consumption.

Laura Dubester, CET's Director, is enthusiastic about the benefits of this new partnership to existing and new customers and western Massachusetts communities. "We are excited that GreenStart supports solar electric installations in western Massachusetts as well as wind turbines in eastern Massachusetts. One of CET's goals is to combine education about decreasing our dependence on electricity generated from coal and other fossil fuels with the ability to take affordable actions that help increase the supply of electricity from clean, renewable sources."

Mass Energy's Executive Director Larry Chretian said, "Citizens are concerned with oil price hikes, impacts from global warming and air pollution's connection to children's health. We are pleased that through this partnership, Mass Energy and CET can provide statewide leadership to help consumers join together to be part of the solution."

ॐ

Kindergarteners to Entertain at May Community Dinner

The last community potluck of the season on May 11 will feature a program of poetry recited by the children of the Monterey Kindergarten. Under the direction of their teacher Susan Anderson, the children will treat the audience to children's classics and old favorites, including poems by A. A. Milne, Emily Dickinson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Robert Frost. The children recite the poetry from memory and, if past years are any indication, with enormous enthusiasm and energy. This annual event is another of our Monterey gems that is not to be missed, so join us at 6:00 p.m. for the potluck in the Community Room of the Monterey Meetinghouse and then upstairs in the sanctuary at around 7:15 for the poetry. Afterward everyone is invited back downstairs for cookies.

All are welcome at the community dinners. Please bring ample food to share with the group, a serving utensil, and plates and silverware for yourself. Anyone staying afterward to help clean up gets a grade of "A" and the committee's gratitude.

Del Martin, speaker for last month's dinner, gave a wonderful talk about the geology of the Berkshires on April 13th. His knowledge and ability to communicate a complex topic elicited many good questions and inspired a deeper appreciation for our region. Many thanks, Del.

After May, there will be no community potluck until autumn, but the committee welcomes feedback and ideas at any time, as well as volunteers for next year. We would love to hear from you; call Dianna Downing at 528-3381.

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Kathryn Roberts

Roberts Woods Farm Plans Open House

To celebrate the birth of the spring foals, Roberts Woods Farm, owned by Marc and Kathryn Roberts, and managed by Brian Puntin, will hold an open house on Saturday, June 4, 2005, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Visitors will be able to view the horses, including the stallion, mothers, and the new babies.

Icelandic Horse demonstrations highlighting the unique tolt will take place in the arena at 1:30 and 3:00 pm. The tolt is a smooth, fast running walk that delights rider and spectator. Their other special gait, the flying pace, calls for an all-out effort for the horse as it "flies" at thirty miles an hour.

Hillary Houldsworth and Emily Martin, accomplished junior riders, have designed a program to illustrate their special love of this horse. Children are invited to join in events such as hayrides and Viking Horse painting. In addition, visitors will be entered in a raffle.

Come enjoy the afternoon and the beautiful horses. Learn more about this breed that comes from the Far North. Taken to Iceland around a.d. 800 by the Vikings, they have been used for transportation and work in that rugged country. Never bred with other horses, the Icelandic Horse has stayed separate from the evolution of horses on the mainland of Europe. They remained small and hearty through the Icelandic winters. These horses seek strong attachments to human partners and make an affectionate friend to rider and caretaker.

Come and learn about the horses. Come and have fun. Refreshments will be served. All visitors are welcome; however, children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information call 528-6188.

Friends Of Wilson-McLaughlin House Receives Nonprofit Status

Friends Of Wilson-McLaughlin House, Inc., is a private nonprofit (501c3) corporation created by the Wilson-McLaughlin House Committee to collect, manage and utilize funds raised from private donations and grants. These funds will be used to meet the stipulations of Edith Wilson's will: to secure the 28.61-acre site, the town must maintain the house in good condition and use it for municipal purposes. The committee has been consulting with several sources to receive architectural advice and estimates about the costs involved in the proposed project, the creation of a Monterey Community Center. The committee has received encouragement and an enthusiastic response from town citizens and has an article on the warrant for the May 7th Town Meeting requesting permission to work on the building, after which they will start gearing up for fundraising and creating more formal plans for the renovation.

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Sandisfield Arts Center 2005 Performance Series

In 1995, a visionary group of concerned citizens formed to save a historic meetinghouse/synagogue and turn it into a community arts center. Ten years later, the restored building has become a focal point of community life and a prized destination for lovers of the performing and visual arts. Visitors now come from all over Berkshire, Hampden, and Litchfield Counties for unique, quality presentations. Whether in the main hall or the intimate downstairs cabaret, audiences and artists alike cherish the warm ambience and great acoustics of the performance spaces. The Sandisfield Arts Center has become the "best-kept secret in the Berkshires."

The 2005 Performance Series represents a new high standard at the Sandisfield Arts Center. On Saturday, May 28, at 8 p.m., journey to another world in an evening of South Indian dance and music featuring Lauren Paul, Joseph Getter, David Nelson, and Balraj Balasubrahmaniyan. In "A Concert of Bharata Natyam," Lauren will demonstrate this classical dance form from the southern part of India encompassing wonderfully complex rhythmic footwork, as well as an elaborate gesture language for telling stories of the Indian pantheon and moving love poems.

Khevre, meaning "friends" or "community," performs on Saturday, June 18, at 8 p.m. Michael Winograd and Khevre are in the forefront of the new generation of Klezmer musicians. Klezmer is an irresistible, party-inducing mix of Greek and Eastern and Central European music performed at Jewish celebrations. Winograd is one of the young modernists leading a twenty-first-century revival of this Old World music.

For the first time ever, the Sandisfield Arts Center will present a mini Theatre Festival to benefit the Bill Crofut Arts Fund for Children. On Saturday July 2, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, July 3, at 3 p.m., Rattler Productions will perform Alfred Uhry's *Driving Miss Daisy* and Athol Fugard's *My Children, My Africa*. Formed in 1993, Rattler Productions/A Mixed Co. has enjoyed a series of successes throughout the U. S. with acclaimed productions of Athol Fugard's plays *My Children, My Africa, Valley Song,* and *Master Harold and the Boys*.

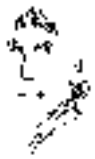
The Hartford Brass Quintet comes to Sandisfield on Saturday, August 6, at 8 p.m. Begun primarily as an occasional Sunday night get-together for reading through the quintet literature, the HBQ has emerged as one of the leading brass ensembles in the Northeast. With literature ranging from Renaissance to contemporary, the brass repertoire should resound in the acoustically superior hall of the Sandisfield Arts Center.

Garnet Rogers performs Saturday, September 3, at 8 p.m. Garnet Rogers has established himself as "one of the major talents of our time". Hailed by the *Boston Globe* as a "charismatic performer and singer," Garnet is a man with a powerful physical presence and a voice to match. With his "smooth, dark baritone" (*Washington Post*), his incredible range, and thoughtful, dramatic phrasing, Garnet is widely considered by fans and critics alike to be one of the finest singers anywhere.

Guitarist Joel Brown performs in the intimate Cabaret space on Saturday, September 24 at 8 p.m. His eclectic career has taken him to England to record with the London Symphony, to Carnegie Hall with soprano Dawn Upshaw, and to recital performances with Frederika von Stade. He has appeared at New York's Alice Tully Hall, the Tanglewood Festival, the Chamber Music Festival at Saratoga, Music in the Mountains in British Columbia, and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Joel Brown is best known to Berkshire audiences as a longtime collaborator with Bill Crofut and Chris Brubeck.

On, Saturday, October 8, at 8 p.m., pianist Frederick Moyer will delight the audience with his enthusiasm, exacting artistry, and adventurous programming. During his twenty-year career as a full-time concert pianist, Moyer has traveled around the globe, appearing as piano soloist with world-renowned orchestras. His nineteen recordings comprise works by thirty composers reflecting a wide variety of styles.

The Sandisfield Arts Center is located on Hammertown Road off Route 57 in Sandisfield. Tickets for all performances are $15 and are available at the door. For more information or reservations call (413) 258-4100, or visit www.sandisfield-artscenter.org.



Kiss Me Quickly Bridget

Philosophy's a walking stick,
some days used as a planting stick
or a red wheelbarrow foddered
full of bold aspiration,
the long-handled spade making good
the price of proficiency
oh, kiss me quickly Bridget
break through that tough resistant shell
waiting was so cold and lonely
stay with me now long and strongly
and save these sallow saints, their prayers,
for the petroleum fields
and their money-god martyrdom;
they would only spoil our rapture
somewhere it is written or said
that in due time it all will fall
leaves and empires and all of us
the world will harden once again
just kiss me quickly Bridget
so that we'll know the rise and swell

— R. Zukowski

Having crossed the Tiber

The river runs like a ribbon through time
Never-ending, never-ending, never-ending
bridges arch over, ancient and new

people cross these hyphens of history
from birth to rebirth, unaware
never-ending, never-ending, never-ending

I pause mid-span to marvel at the flow of souls
across the bridge of eons
never-ending, never-ending, never-ending

drops feed the source of both blood and brooks
sparkling, coursing to that sea that swallows all
never-ending, never-ending, never-ending

now I cross another bridge and stop.
I carry a crucifix of paradox:
this fleeting was is forever Now!

All rivers running, veining through time
never-ending, never-ending, never-ending
are teaching me this.

— A. O. Howell

Litany

Let me sing my litany
under my breath, but no less a song.
Thrilling to my essence with the joy of life
but hiding the fears that nibble at the edges
as we age and look around us,
Never was there such a spring.
Thanks for that glory
and for companionship of those we love.
Thanks be for life itself
and all its moods and treasures.

— Nancy Adams

Gould Farm Opens Fellside in Medford

Gould Farm's residential center in Boston has been successfully relocated to a gracious, rambling, early 1900s house near the threshold of the Middlesex Fells in Medford, a North Boston neighborhood. The Fells are a dense wildland that stretches to Stoneham and provides a refuge for Gould Farmers adjusting to life in the city.

For our first meal at Fellside, one of the last days in October, we carried in Thai food, lit candles, and sat together around the table. Oren got out his guitar and filled the still, echoing rooms with music. And every day since then it has been feeling more and more like home. For five of the twelve residents who live there now, Fellside is all they've ever known of the Boston program. But for the rest of us, it feels a bit like we've arrived, finally, in the Promised Land. Two years of wondering, (where oh where is there a place for us?) in the wilderness of NIMBY-land began to feel like forty.

It's been a long, long journey, but there's a Will Gould kind of ending to the story. Since 1979 when the first group of people from Gould Farm went out to establish a transition site in the Greater Boston area, we had been based on sixty bucolic acres of meadows and woodlands in Lincoln, leased from The Farrington Memorial. The residence itself was a sprawling, pillared structure with huge rooms, moist ceilings, an archaic heating system, and a dumbwaiter. It was said to have a certain charm by those who got to know it extremely well ... or by those who never lived there. Residents did not have access to public transportation except by scheduled rides unless they owned a car, and there was limited interaction with our surrounding community. Still, it worked and we felt lucky to have it. Other smaller group residences were bought, remodeled, lived in, and sold as the Boston program evolved, but Farrington House remained the heart of the program.

Then in June of 2001 the Farrington Board decided they "were going in a different direction" and asked us to vacate by June of 2004. Three years seemed reasonable enough and we began the search hopefully, almost eager to let go of what we loved so much to complain about. After twenty-five years in the shelter of Lincoln's benevolence, we had no idea what we were facing. Not only was suitable real estate large enough to meet our needs almost inaccessible (now we knew the absolute luxury of sixty acres in Lincoln), but everywhere we found a possibility, neighborhood opposition to us, to our special and wonderful community, was visceral and overwhelmingly negative. "But you don't even know us," we wanted to call out above the rhetoric of fear and ignorance. They had no intention of ever giving themselves the opportunity.

By the time the third place we tried to purchase was taken off the market because of pressure from the neighbors, morale was low and the termination of our lease

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at Farrington was less than nine months away. Then, quietly, in the unobtrusive way that grace has of slipping into ones life, there was an e-mail from someone who owned a large, unusual house in West Medford. It wasn't on the market, but they had read an editorial in the *Boston Globe* about the closed doors (slammed shut!) we had been confronted with, and they thought the house they owned might be perfect for us. It was located at 34 Grove St., just a block or so off Rt. 60 (where the bus stops) and a few blocks more to coffee shops, Brooks, a shoe repair shop, the Lowell/North Station commuter line, and one of Boston's best restaurants. It was an easy walk to Arlington Center, to Medford Square, to the swimming area on Mystic Lake, and of course, to the Fells. There was a large yard where Gould Farm Adirondack chairs could be grouped for private talks. It had lots of rooms and high dry ceilings and porches and was painted a warm yellow that was inviting in the early spring light. It could be a place to come to eagerly at the end of a day, find the table set for dinner, and find community and support and home. We began to see ourselves in this picture.

Of course buying real estate in Boston is a mad endeavor even when you assume you have the blessing of Brother Will, but this time the obstacles were surmounted. When price remained a factor, we asked an angel for the last $250,000 and were answered with an open heart and hand. Neighbors and town officials spoke their concerns but then listened respectfully to our responses. We began to allow ourselves to hope, then believe, then rejoice. For their July meeting, our Board of Directors gathered in a circle in the dining room cleared temporarily of paint cans and the trappings of renovation for the occasion, and Fellside, Gould Farm's transition residence, became a reality.

We are comfortable at Fellside. It is intimate and lends itself to easy conversation in the hallway, resource room, or kitchen. There are small areas to slip away from the bustle and gaiety of the large living areas. And it is beautiful with wooden floors, a wide staircase, lovely mantelpieces, and, surprisingly, mostly enough room for our needs.

Our neighbors want to know who we are. They came to an open house and exchanged cookies at Christmas. They offered to plow snow. Do you know how hard it is to get a good, reasonable snowplow agreement in Boston? We help Ellen, a few doors down, move pieces of furniture for the Furniture Bank. We help the Brooks Estate with its trail maintenance. We come and go as if this is where we always hoped to be.

And there is one special thing we couldn't have known to hope for but whose beauty brings so much joy. Behind the house, and sheltering us with strong old arms is a great beech tree, indomitable and purposeful in its mission as Will Gould himself was in his.

—Donna Burkhart & Oren Rosenthal

Sandisfield Historical Society's "Spring Fling"

The Sandisfield Histroical Society will hold its third annual benefit Spring Fling Dance on Saturday, May 14, from 7:30–11:30 p.m. at Firehouse #2 in Sandisfield. The featured band is the very popular Country Travelers. Wilbur Richard will also be there to do some square dance calling. Admission is $10, with children 12 and under free, which includes coffee, tea, soda and desserts. Homemade sausage pizza will be on sale during this event. So bring the entire family and meet your community. For directions and further information call Jo at 413-258-4786 or Marcia at 413-258-2898.

The Way Things Were

Barbara Tryon shared the following from a newspaper clipping, thought to be at least one hundred years old, found in her family memorabilia:

"Where the Grin Comes in"

A farmer's wife in Connecticut, hurrying from milking the cows to the kitchen, from the kitchen to the churn, from the woodshed and back to the kitchen stove, was asked if she wanted to vote. She vehemently replied: "No, I certainly do not. I say now that if there's one little thing that the men folks can do alone, for heaven's sake let 'em do it."

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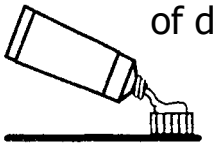

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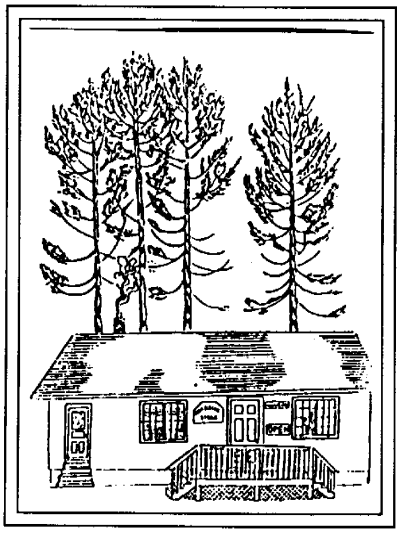
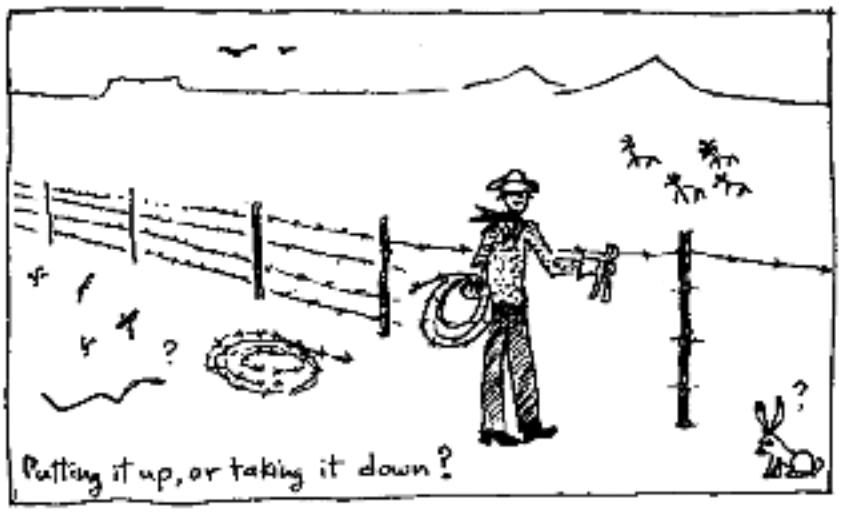


Wire in the Desert

Last week we sat in the visitors' center at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge in Pima County, Arizona. I'm sure the center gets plenty of visitors, particularly scout troops and school groups. On this day, we were the only guests of the place. We had driven down highway 286 and watched the vegetation change from Sonora Desert cactus and mesquite to real grassland. The road, which does not bend left or right, takes regular dips into the dry washes where highway signs warn you not to enter "when flooded." You get the message that at certain times there is lots of fast water here.

Buenos Aires used to be a private cattle ranch and was bought by the U.S. Department of the Interior a few decades ago. One project on the place was to bring back the pronghorns, or antelope, that had disappeared from this area. A small herd was imported from Texas and right away it was clear that pronghorns and fences don't mix. According to an informative video we watched, pronghorns *could* jump a fence like the barbed wire ranch fences left on the refuge, but it is not their style. They take the "scramble through it" approach to obstacles, which probably works fine when they are dealing with sagebrush, mesquite, chaparral, and other natural barriers that grow in the western wilds. So far their behavior has not had time to evolve to cope with wire, so they get hung up, injured, and worse. The video showed workers with heavy gloves and cutters, removing miles of wire.

Barbed wire has had an evolution of its own. Folks collect it and study it, the way they will just about anything, and can often tell by its design just when and where it was made. I looked it up in our encyclopedia and learned that wire fencing of this type was first patented in the U.S. in 1867. Before this, fences had been made of timber, earth, stone, and even living plants like the hedgerows in England.



In 1864, Joseph Glidden of DeKalb, Illinois, invented a machine that could manufacture barbed wire, and by 1890 open range in the American west was completely converted into fenced pastureland. Growing up in the east, we kids learned about the western range wars from TV and in history class, with the ranchers and the "sod-busters" shooting each other over fencing.

Last week we saw a few pronghorns on the refuge, also some mule deer. I am sure they are better off for the removal of the old barbed wire. But there was some new wire up on the refuge, too, and it was not mentioned in my encyclopedia nor the public relations video.

Driving down 286, just before the refuge entrance, we saw what looked like a little penitentiary, or maybe a small concentration camp. There were a few residential buildings—modest, government-issue—surrounded by high cyclone fencing with shining coils of razor wire at the top. This was not about cattle or pronghorns.

Southern Arizonans have got a people problem. It is in their faces every single day, and they read about it and about themselves in the national media. They are very sensitive that the rest of the world sees them as unfriendly and unsympathetic to the droves of Mexicans crossing the border and making their way across the Buenos Aires Refuge, the Sierrita Mountains, and the hot open desert, which is full of thorns. Folks dying of thirst will break into a lonely government-issue home. Some

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folks crossing the border illegally, without documents, will do almost anything for a little cash: steal, carry drugs. They are coming here, risking all, for money.

Big farms and hotels hire them and pay them a little bit. Most of it gets sent home to families in Mexico where the government has failed the poor. Folks in Arizona who work on a remote wildlife refuge spend the day removing barbed wire and go home to a tall fence with a locked gate and barbed wire at the top. The days of open range and open borders are long gone, and barbed wire, or "bob wire" as some people call it, has been the instrument.

Our last day in Arizona we took a hike down Sycamore Canyon, off the Ruby Road. The canyon goes due south, and I kept wondering why it isn't a preferred highway for undocumented Mexicans because there is water there. Our guidebook says that when you get to the international border there is a barbed wire fence. Maybe it is to keep the pronghorns out, or in.

Back on the Ruby Road, as the sun dropped over the Baboquiviri Mountains, out on the Tohono O'odam Reservation, we nearly ran over a snake. I must have been looking at the bigger picture. "Did you see that snake?!" We pulled over and Joe and I ran back. There were our tire tracks, straddling the snake. It did not look much like snake, though. Thinner than a pencil, about eighteen inches long, what it most resembled was a piece of, you guessed it, wire. Even the head was thinner than a pencil, like a long slim triangle, and the snake had a few angular bends in it. It could have been a piece of baling wire that someone had used to

rehang their muffler after one too many bumps on the Ruby Road.

The field guide said this was a Mexican vine snake, extremely rare in the U.S., only found in one teeny part of southern Arizona, within four miles of the Mexican border. Joseph Glidden's barbed wire machine of 1867 changed the western way of life for ranchers, migrants, pronghorns, and government employees. The Mexican vine snake that I miraculously did not run over hasn't noticed.

— Bonner J. McAllester

CATA Benefit Performances

Community Access to the Arts, (CATA) is presenting *SenseABILITIES,* its annual performance and benefit on May 13 at 7 p.m. and on May 14 at 1 p.m. at Shakespeare and Company's Founders' Theater in Lenox. The community is invited to witness and experience CATA's performing artists on stage, the 2005 CATAdirect collection, and a select exhibition of visual arts. CATA's faculty artists, board of directors, and community volunteers will join CATA's participants, individuals with disabilities, for an extraordinary event. Special guests at Friday evening's performance include NBC news correspondent and author John Hockenberry and esteemed English baritone Ben Luxon.

Community Access to the Arts, a nonprofit arts organization founded by Sandra Newman in 1993, seeks to lessen the stigma of difference and disability through shared experiences in the visual and performing arts and to enhance public awareness about the valuable contribution all individuals play in their community. This event is CATA's largest annual celebration to promote community awareness and integration and is also the organization's largest fundraising event. The funds raised are used to support programs and services.

CATA has 26 faculty artists who teach hundreds of participants in over 1,000 creative arts workshops in 24 residential, educational, therapeutic, and elder care settings, as well as to individuals living at home.

The benefit performance on Friday, May 13, at 7 p.m. will be followed by a delicious array of desserts and savories courtesy of Amy Loveless catering, with champagne and wine, and includes a unique live auction. Tickets are $125 per person for the Friday evening event. The Saturday, May 14, event at 1:00 p.m., and is suitable for all ages. A $30 donation is suggested. Both performances will run for approximately 75 minutes and will be A.S.L. interpreted by Trudy Gilbert. Before and after the show guests will have the opportunity to view and purchase items from our CATAdirect collection, a beautiful and fanciful array of handbags, pillows, and portrait dolls made by our participants. Our art exhibit will also have for sale a limited collection of visual arts created by CATA's participants.

To purchase tickets, call CATA at 413-528-5485, e-mail secata@bcn.net or visit www.communityaccesstotheArts.org.

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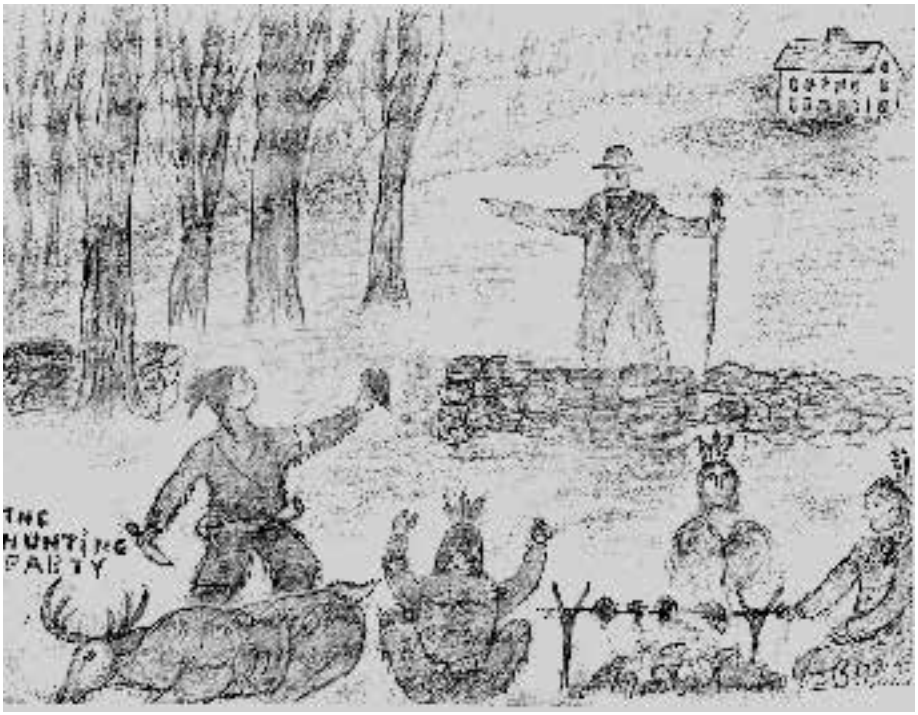
Adonijah and the Indians



According to an article in the *Boston Globe* on April 9, 2005, Harvard University has invited a Wampanoag to give this year's commencement invocation. When this happens, it will perhaps mark the 350th anniversary of Harvard's long-lost Indian College, which produced its first Native American graduate in 1665. It is easy to forget that all of the Ivy League Colleges received grants and were given missions to educate and Christianize the Indians. Yale was no exception, sending John Sergeant to the Mahicans and the Mission House in Stockbridge. Sergeant was later succeeded by Jonathan Edwards, from Princeton, who in 1753 delivered a famous sermon in Stockbridge entitled "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," quoted in entirety in *The Berkshire Reader*. Sergeant and Edwards ministered to some of the more primitive souls, both settler and native.

Adonijah Bidwell, Monterey's first minister and also a product of Yale, began building his parsonage in 1750 on sixty acres of land given by the founding fathers to establish a Christian influence in this corner of the Berkshire wilderness. Completion was delayed until 1753, partly because of the French and Indian War. But houses in this area were spared because the local Mahicans had already signed a peace treaty with the Mohawks, providing a neutral barrier from attacks such as those against Deerfield to the northeast. This treaty is described in *Manitou* by James Mavor and Byron Dix, which includes a picture of the stone cairn at the base of Monument Mountain. According to what Chief Konkapot relayed to John Sergeant, the cairn was the grave marker of a sachem that then became a treaty marker; the Mahicans were given all the land within one day's walk in every direction for their hunting grounds.

The stone monument, from which Monument Mountain gets its name is only a few miles from the Bidwell House as the crow flies, and there are also cairns near the site of the first meetinghouse just below the present manse. Bernard Drew, historian and author of *Great Barrington: Great Town, Great History,* told me that before there were any roads in these parts, a major Indian trail went right past them, probably later becoming the path for building the Albany Post Road. Traces of the old roadbed lead up to Stockbridge, past the Ice Glen and Monument Mountain. Chief Konkapot himself had a lodge along Muddy Brook before his tribe sold their land in 1724. Yet the Bidwells had trouble with Indian hunting parties trespassing for many years to come. Why would that happen?

I took it upon myself to go to the Stockbridge Historical Society in the basement of the Stockbridge Library to talk with Curator Barbara Allen. She informed me I had come to the right place and promptly produced, under glass to be sure, the original document signed by Col. Ashley and twenty some Indians or more. The Indians including Chief Konkapot, then spelled Conkepot, could not write their names and signed instead with marks of their totems or clans. Konkapot himself signed the mark of a turkey track on what was known as the Housatonic Deed. All the land that is now Sheffield, Great Barrington, and part of Stockbridge and Lee was sold for four hundred and sixty pounds, three barrels of cider, and thirty quarts of rum. After studying the wording for some time, I could not tell if the sale included the vicinity of the Bidwell House.

So it is my guess that when the Mahicans then consigned to the Stockbridge band small parcels of property upon

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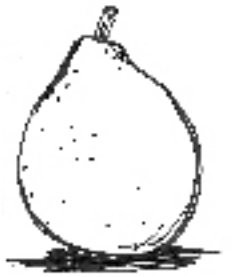
which to build their houses, they always felt they still had the right granted by the Mohawks to hunt in Monterey, which was within one day's walk of the stone cairn at Monument Mountain. They would have come past the cairns at the Bidwell House following the old Indian trail, that was to become the Boston Albany Post Road. The history of their trail and their coming and going has become very cold and is hard to follow for certain. But this story seems to be written in stone monuments marked by primitive totem marks on parchment along the way. Thank you for joining me in a walk through that time and this place, trying to make some valid connections and become educated in the best Ivy League Indian College tradition.

— George Emmons



New Recycling Opportunity

Berkshire County businesses can now recycle bulbs and lamps containing mercury at the Pittsfield Resource Recovery Facility operated by eco/Pittsfield (eco). The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) and eco worked together for several months to make it more convenient and less expensive for Berkshire businesses to recycle spent light tubes.

Most light bulbs used by businesses, including fluorescent tubes and high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps, contain mercury. Disposing of these lamps in the trash is prohibited by state and federal regulations (310 CMR 30) and enforced by Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Keeping spent bulbs out of the trash helps reduce the amount of mercury released into the environment.

Eco is making it easier for businesses to recycle mercury-containing lighting. Eco operates the waste to energy facility at 500 Hubbard Avenue in Pittsfield and has offered to cover the transportation and administration costs for businesses participating in the program. They will also supply barrels or boxes to help businesses safely store lamps until they have a quantity for recycling. Businesses will be responsible only for the actual cost of recycling, typically about 30 cents per four-foot bulb. Any business in Berkshire County interested in recycling lamps should first contact eco (518-434-1227 ext 107) to get started.

Keeping mercury out of the trash through recycling can make a real difference in the Berkshires. When employees throw bulbs into a compactor or dumpster, the broken bulbs release mercury vapors that can be inhaled by anyone in the area. Even if the bulbs aren't broken at that point, when they arrive at the disposal site the risk is high for mercury being released into the air and soil. Eventually, the mercury ends up in lakes and streams. Once in our waterways, mercury starts the journey into the food chain.

Even small quantities of mercury are extremely toxic. Mercury is especially dangerous for children and fetuses. In January 2003 the Centers for Disease Control reported that nearly one out of twelve women of child bearing age is exposed to levels of mercury that exceed what the EPA considers safe. Most people are exposed to mercury from eating contaminated fish. Recycling fluorescent lamps can make Berkshire County a safer, healthier place to work and live.

Anyone interested in recycling bulbs can contact CET or eco/Pittsfield. CET can provide technical assistance to help businesses get started with recycling. This service is available for no charge. Information and forms necessary to participate can be found on CET's website: www.cetonline.org/FarmBusiness/fluor_bulbrecycling.htm. Follow the link to Berkshire County. For more information, contact James Cahillane at CET, 413-445-4556 ext 25, jamiec@cetonline.org or eco/Pittsfield's Meg Morris at 518-434-1227 ext 107, mmorris@energyanswers.com.

— Ruth Dinerman
Director of Communications, CET

Notes from Greenhaven Farm

Soil, Soil, Soil

For practical "can-do" wisdom, we follow the teaching of Eliot Coleman. Eliot was a neighbor of the legendary Helen and Scott Nearing, authors of *Living the Good Life,* a book that inspired the back-to-the-land movement of the early seventies. Eliot advocates for small scale (five acres or less) organic market gardening serving local needs. Today's American farms have consolidated and grown to thousands of acres, requiring the use of expensive equipment, hired labor, and chemical labor saving pesticides and herbicides.

For example, the latest innovation in "big ag" is a GPS autopilot for your behemoth machines, whose ads say, "You can work when you need to . . . in fog, rain, dust, night." Eliot believes in the European model of small farms growing for local markets. He recommends "walking tractors," small machines not requiring an additional ten to fifteen horsepower to carry the lard-butt-farmer. (I resemble, I mean, resent that!)

The most important advice Eliot gives is to concentrate on soil improvement. Add organic amendments, compost, green and animal manures, and plants will thrive without the use of chemicals. After three years of following these methods, our original garden is testing at almost optimum fertility for vegetables. We could have taken shortcuts, such as using chemical fertilizers to increase production, but we are committed to improving our soil gradually using these organic methods. We could also have used pesticides, which kill good bugs along with the bad. But we have learned that bugs attack the least healthy plants first. When your soil has all the necessary micronutrients and microorganisms, plants are healthy and pests will leave them alone. So when we are asked how we control bugs, we quote Eliot: "soil, soil, soil." When asked why our vegetables taste better, we also say, you guessed it, "soil, soil, soil."

Although Eliot's advice is based somewhat anecdotally upon several decades of success, research confirms it. In the nineteenth century a German professor discovered that the density of plant juices is an indicator of their sweetness. His name was Brix, and a measurement scale named for him is still a standard used by a testing machine called a refractometer, which measures soluble solids, including sugars, in plants. Vegetables with a high Brix score taste better.

One of our favorite publications is *Growing for Market,* a newsletter for growers like us. In an article about Brix, they quoted John Rowley, a food consultant: "I have thousands of Brix measurements which I have tried to correlate with farm practices," he said, "I measured Brix in fruits and vegetables compulsively for about six years before the light bulb went on. Organic matter in soil is a key factor." Rowley has done extensive research on potatoes and the battle with Colorado potato beetles. He found that they were "less of a problem at 13 Brix from leaf sap. At 15 Brix and above, the potato beetle stops eating the leaves altogether."

If you haven't guessed already, the answer to our favorite question, "What do you do in the off-season?" is that we read—lots! Well dear neighbors, I hope you heard the answers to the three most frequent questions we are asked. By the way, if you want to see our Italian walking tractor, I'd love to show it to you. I must confess that this year I bought an attachment, an American-designed cart with a seat on it! Oh well, I guess I just have to stop eating so much pie.

— Steve Pullen

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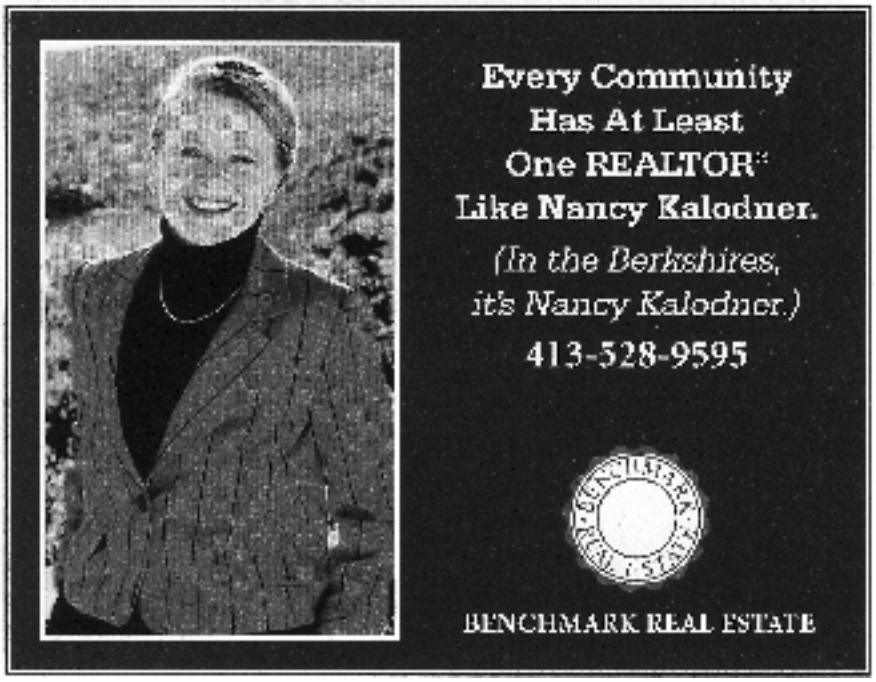

P.O. Box 9, 01245

Bring the National Guard Home

To the Editor:

This spring at annual Town Meetings all over the state citizens will be voting on a resolution concerning the Massachusetts National Guard and the ongoing war in Iraq. In Monterey, this resolution appears as Article 26 on the warrant. It will take some dedication for voters to stay until the end of a long meeting to discuss and vote on this issue, but the matter is so critical I am sure we can do it justice.

This campaign, to direct the governor to order the immediate return of all Massachusetts National Guard units and personnel now serving in Iraq, has been modeled after the very successful one in Vermont in early March, when over fifty towns voted in favor of the resolution. Other states have joined the campaign to return the control and purpose of the Guard to those originally stated in the United States Constitution, which grants Congress the power to "provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the laws of the Union, to suppress insurrections and repel Invasions," and the Massachusetts Constitution, which provides for the General Assembly to direct the training and arming of members of the Massachusetts National Guard for defense of the Commonwealth.

At this point National Guard troops make up nearly one-third of the U.S. Army troops in Iraq. Originally intended as a home guard or militia, they are now far from the communities they signed up to serve. Governor Brian Schweitzer of Montana, for instance, has requested that the Montana National Guard troops and helicopters be brought home from Iraq immediately to prepare for fighting what could be the worst summer season of wildfires yet. Other western states face the same problem: their firefighters, first responders, and emergency medical personnel are far from home and are caught in what has been called a "revolving-door draft," in which stop-loss orders violate the understanding between Guard members and the state and the nation they volunteered to serve.

We are not likely to see rampant wildfires here in Monterey, but we have experienced natural disasters during which we needed help from across the state. The federal government has sent nearly 4,000 Massachusetts National Guard members overseas to fight a war of choice against an "enemy" that posed no threat to the Commonwealth nor to the United States. The costs in lost lives, injuries, psychic trauma, disruption of family life, financial hardship, and damage to the fabric of civic life in many communities in the Commonwealth have been great. They would have been suffered willingly had there been a threat to our nation, but as there was none, these costs are intolerable.

It is past time for the governor and the congressional delegation to restore the balance between the federal government and the states. It is time to limit the nearly complete federal control over state National Guard units to cases where :

1. there is reasonable evidence that war powers are requested in order to protect against a threat to the territory of the United States,

2. there is an insurrection or a plausible threat of insurrection, or

3. there is a declaration of war under the United States Constitution.

Article 26 was placed on the warrant by citizen petition. Come exercise your right as a citizen, talk to your neighbors, stay 'til the end, cast your vote, be active. The federal government has been riding roughshod over the welfare of the local citizenry on so many fronts. Let's take a stand here in Monterey. Let's approve this article and direct our voices through our governor and congressional delegation. "Enough!"

— Bonner J. McAllester

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Seating is limited! Call: 413-258-8166
or visit: www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Glynis Oliver

Garden sheds at Gould Farm waiting patiently for spring.

Contributors

We are most grateful to the following readers for their recent contributions in response to our annual fundraising appeal. Thanks, neighbors—you keep us going.

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Town Offices.

Saturday, May 7: Annual Town Meeting and Town Election, at the Firehouse, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, May 8: Mother's Day. Take Ma out to dinner.

Wednesday, May 11: Last Community Potluck Supper until fall, 6 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. Monterey Kindergarten is featured reciting poems in the sanctuary at 7:15 p.m. See p.10 for more information.

Thursday, May 12: Free blood pressure clinic, 2:30–3:30 p.m., Town Offices, administered by the Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Friday, May 13: CATA presents annual performance and benefit at Shakespeare and Company's Founder's Theater in Lenox, 7 p.m. Additional performance on Saturday at 1 p.m. Please see p.17 for details.

Saturday, May 14: Sandisfield Historical Society holds Spring Fling Dance, 7:30–11:30 p.m. Admission $10. For more information, see p.15.

Sunday, May 15: Berkshire National Fish Hatchery presents "Earth Day" from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Monday, May 23: Full Moon

Saturday, May 28:

Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Jeff Walker. All dances are taught, beginners and children are welcome. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

Sandisfield Arts Center presents an evening of South Indian dance and music at 8 p.m. Tickets $15 at the door. See p.12 for program details.

Monday, May 30: Memorial Day

Saturday, June 4: Open House at Robert Woods Farm, 1-4 p.m. See p.11.

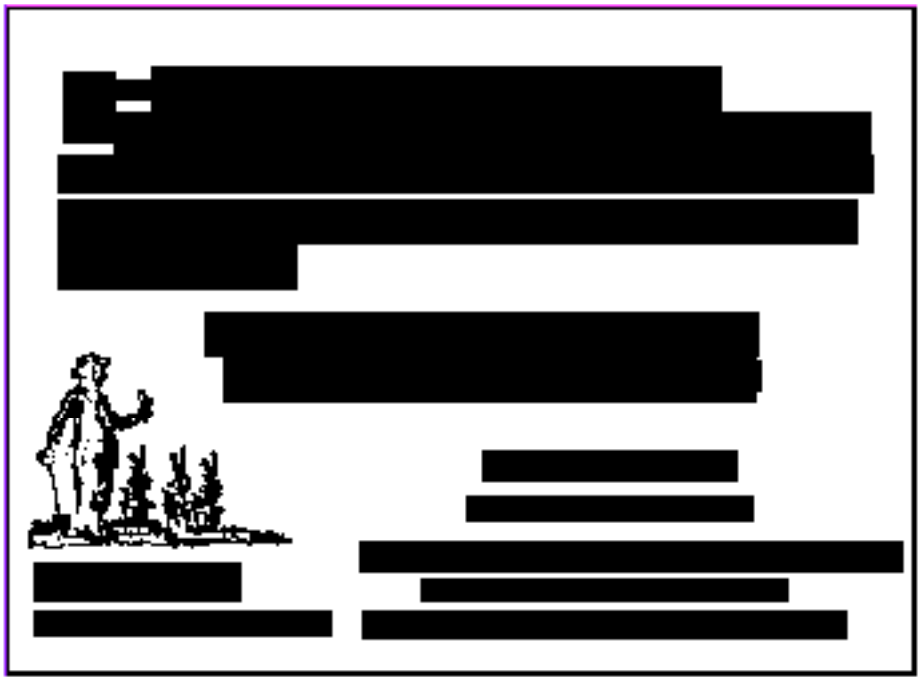
The Observer
March 26–April 25

High temp. (4/21)	81°
Low temp. (3/26)	17°
Avg. high temp.	57°
Avg. low temp.	30.6°
Avg. temp.	43.6°
Total rainfall	5.08"

Precipitation occurred on 12 days.

Transfer Station Hours

Sunday	10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Wednesday	8 a.m.–1 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m.–1 p.m.



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George Emmons, p. 18; Bonner McAllester, p. 16.

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